

The WonderKey School Family Handbook 2023-2024



We are proud to be an
Equal Opportunity Service Provider/Employer.



School Director:
Executive Directors:

Fern Helfer, B.A.
Howard Batterman, Ed.M.
Dale Batterman, Ed.M.

1702 Yost Road, Blue Bell, PA 19422 • Located at **Sesame Day Camp**
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August 2023

Dear WonderKey School Families,

It is with pride that we welcome you (back) to The WonderKey School. Thank you for the opportunity to provide meaningful learning experiences for your child(ren). Our goal is to help each child develop a strong, positive self-image by focusing on personal, social and academic growth, while providing a nurturing and secure environment.

The **2023-2024 School Year** promises to provide exciting and stimulating learning experiences, while also bringing children together for the important social interactions. Please take a moment to become familiar with the content of the enclosed **Family Handbook**, which serves as a guide to school procedures and policies.

We look forward to providing rewarding learning experiences for your child(ren) in a partnership of home and school.

Professionally yours,

Fern Helfer
School Director

Dale and Howard Batterman
Owners/Executive Directors

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Mission Statement

The WonderKey School is committed to inspiring young children to find answers to their questions about the world. Our goal is to encourage each student's positive self-image by focusing on personal, social and academic growth in a safe and nurturing environment.

Curriculum Statement

At **The WonderKey School** we know that young children learn best through hands-on discovery in an environment that offers a variety of opportunities for child-directed exploration. Our curriculum, aligned with the Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards, is unique to **The WonderKey School** and has evolved over many years. The Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards guide us as we plan for developmentally appropriate activities for the children and families that we serve. Our goal is to build on children's interests and strengths, while developing new skills and maximizing each child's opportunities to learn. Individual, small group, and large group experiences are offered in the key learning areas including; Learning through Play, Language and Literacy Development, Mathematical Thinking and Expression, Scientific Thinking and Technology, Social Studies Thinking-Connecting to Communities, Creative Thinking and Expression, Health, Wellness and Physical Development and Social and Emotional Development.

KEYSTONE STARS

The WonderKey School is proud to be a **4 STAR Program** with the Keystone Stars Initiative. **Keystone Stars** is a continuous quality improvement program for early learning centers and schools. Centers/schools enrolled in the 'Stars' program work toward achieving a total of four stars. Each star level has its own research-based performance standards. These measures make a difference in the quality of care children receive:

- Staff education and professional development
- Program learning environment
- Leadership and management of the organization
- Partnerships with families and the community

STAFF EDUCATION

Lead Teachers at **The WonderKey School** have extensive experience and education in Early Childhood Education or a related field.

Classroom Aides and Assistant Teachers at **The WonderKey School** possess various post high school education experiences, along with extensive experience in Early Childhood classroom environments.

TRANSITIONING INTO THE WONDERKEY PROGRAM

Children are placed in classrooms based upon their chronological age according to the following criteria:

- **Toddler Class** - children must be 2 years of age
- **Pre-Kindergarten 3 Class** - children must be 3 years of age by Sept. 1
- **Pre-Kindergarten 4 Class** - children must be 4 years of age by Sept. 1 and must be toilet trained.

At the start of each school year, a **Family Visitation** event is held prior to the first day of classes. While at Family Visitation, children and their families have the opportunity to get to know one another. Classroom staff will introduce themselves at this event and provide families with information particular to their classroom's curriculum and procedures.

SCHOOL PROGRAMS

School Hours

AM Care	7:30 AM - 9:00 AM
Half Day	9:00 AM - 11:55 AM with Noon dismissal
Half Day + Lunch	9:00 AM - 12:55 PM with 1:00 PM dismissal
School Day	9:00 AM - 2:55 PM with 3:00 PM dismissal
After Care	3:00 PM - 5:00 PM

The Afternoon Enrichment Program (part of our School Day Program)

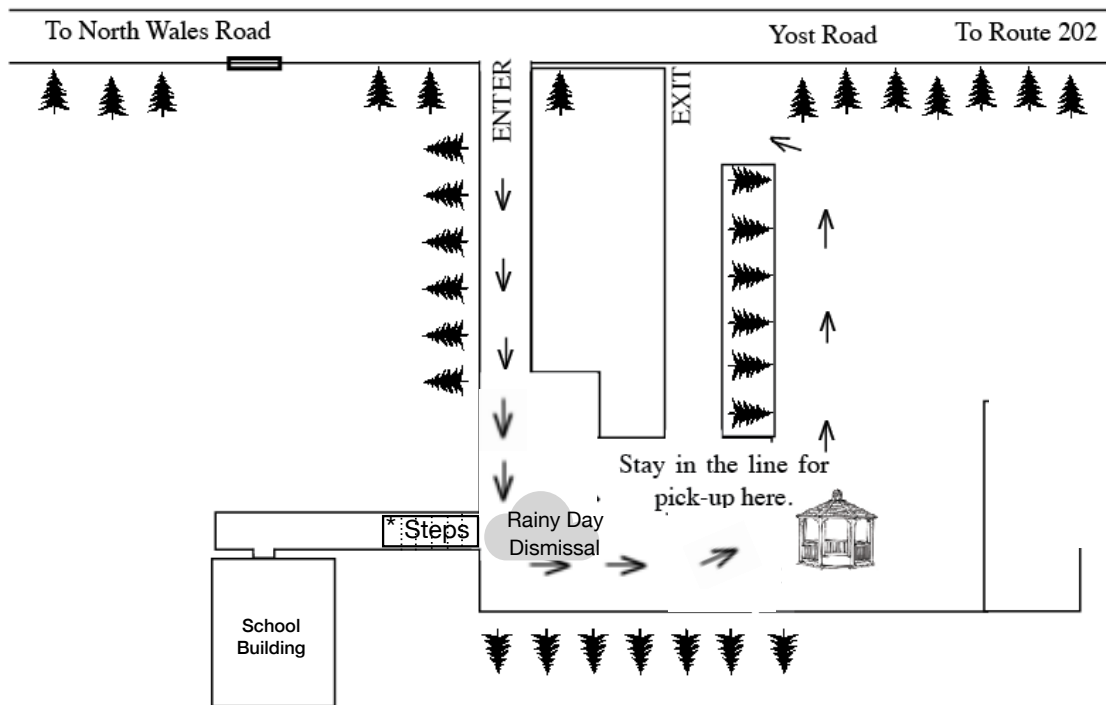
1:00 PM - 3:00 PM, may be inclusive of sessions in Sign Language, Theatre, Music, Art, Creative Movement, Physical Education, Science Exploration, and Culinary Arts.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Safety is our #1 concern!

Please review these directions. Following these directions will allow for organized arrival and dismissal procedures.

It is not necessary to get out of your car other than to help your child with their seatbelt.



Student Arrival

Upon your arrival at school, please park in a designated parking spot, bring your child into the school building and sign him/her in for the day. To maximize your child(ren)'s educational experience he/she should arrive at school at his/her scheduled time. Morning classes begin at 9:00 AM promptly.

While we understand that occasional latenesses occur, constant late arrivals are disruptive to learning in progress.

Student Dismissal

From 11:55 AM - 12:05 PM, 12:55 PM - 1:05 PM and from 2:55 PM - 3:05 PM, child(ren) will be dismissed from the **Welcome Center** gazebo located in the driveway area. Staff will escort your child(ren) to your car, at which time you will need to sign out your child(ren) before buckling him/her up. WonderKey staff will note the time of child(ren)'s pick-up. Late pick-up will incur additional charges. In inclement weather, a flag will be displayed at the **Welcome Center** gazebo, indicating that parents need to wait in their car by the school steps, where your child (ren) will be brought to the family vehicle. Full-Day pick up is pickup any time between 3:00 and 5:00 PM.

- In fair weather, children will be dismissed from the **Welcome Center** gazebo.
- During inclement weather, children will be dismissed from the bottom of the steps of the school building.

CAUTION must be taken as you enter and leave, especially when surfaces may be slippery.

Permission for Authorized Pick-Up

Authorization I.D. cards are issued to each family. Please give these cards **ONLY** to those individuals with whom you entrust with the care and well-being of your child(ren). All individuals, including parents, must present the Family ID card upon pick-up of child(ren).

School must be notified in writing, if possible, if someone other than the parent is picking up a child(ren). If the individual picking up does **NOT** appear on your authorized list, a note or phone call to the school is mandatory before we can release the student. At no time will a child be released until the office has been notified. Individuals picking up a child(ren) without the WonderKey Family ID Card, must present personal ID (i.e. photo driver's license) that confirms parent intentions.

SCHEDULE CHANGES

We offer a flexible option to either add additional hours or add additional days during the week. A "WonderKey Additional Hours" Form **MUST BE COMPLETED** prior to your child(ren)'s extended stay (added day/hours). **Payment, by check, is due along with the completed form.** If you find that you need to add hours often, a permanent schedule change should be made. The change will begin at the start of the next tuition payment period. A change of schedule form must be completed to enact a permanent change. The **Additional Hours Sheet** is for an occasional change, so we can allow for flexibility. It is financially beneficial to permanently change your child's schedule if you are changing it weekly. However, we can accommodate only **one change per semester.** Additional days may only be added provided there is space available in the classroom.

Please note, that although additional days/hours may be added, we do not allow you the "exchange" of days for time missed due to sickness or vacation.

SPECIAL EVENTS ATTENDANCE POLICY

Special events at **The WonderKey School** are highlights throughout the year. A child may attend any school event, even if it occurs on a day that the child is not scheduled to be at school by adding the day; additional charges will apply.

TUITION PAYMENT

Tuition payments are due according to the payment scheduled below:

<u>Fall Payment Due Dates</u>	<u>For the Period:</u>	<u>Spring Payment Due Dates</u>	<u>For the Period:</u>
August 18, 2023	Aug. 29 – Sept. 22, 2023	January 10, 2024	Jan. 22 – Feb. 15, 2024
September 13, 2023	Sept. 26 – Oct. 19, 2023	February 7, 2024	Feb. 16 – Mar.13, 2024
October 11, 2023	Oct. 20 – Nov. 15, 2023	March 6, 2024	Mar. 14 – April 15, 2024
November 8, 2023	Nov. 16 – Dec. 14, 2023	April 10, 2024	April 16 – May 9, 2024
December 6, 2023	Dec. 15 – Jan. 19, 2024	May 8, 2024	May 10 – June 7, 2024

**The WonderKey School TAX ID number is
23-244-2337**

INTERIM CARE PROGRAM

We offer an **Interim Care Program** between the end of the school year and Sesame Day Camp's opening day. The program is free of charge to students enrolled in our 12 month program. Students enrolled in our 10 month school program may take part in the **Interim Care Program** at an additional charge.

Children must be 3 years of age to attend the Interim Care Program and must be potty trained.

SUPERVISION POLICIES

Indoor Supervision Policy

- All children must be within sight of a WonderKey staff member at all times.
- Each class/group will remain in state-mandated staff/child ratios at all times.
- WonderKey children shall be counted, with name to face accuracy, on a scheduled basis. A count of all children must be taken at every transition, including when going outdoors and upon re-entry to the school building to confirm the safe whereabouts of every child.

Outdoor Supervision Policy

In addition to the above Indoor Supervision Policy, when outdoors, WonderKey Staff must:

- Be aware of each child's physical abilities.
- Establish clear and simple safety rules.
- Scan for potential hazards.
- Be aware of play activities while circulating around the play area.
- Teach children what is safe for themselves and others.
- Teach children the appropriate use of each piece of equipment.
- Know that facilitated play is not supervision; during facilitated play, another staff person must supervise.

NUTRITION

Lunch and Snacks

Families are asked to provide their child(ren) with a daily lunch in a lunchbox. All lunches will be refrigerated. **Please inform your child(ren)'s teacher of any items that should not be placed in the refrigerator.** We are a "Peanut Aware" environment, meaning no peanuts, or products that "may contain peanuts", may be brought into **The WonderKey School**. We also ask that grapes be cut in half. Popcorn or hard candies should not be included in your child(ren's) lunchbox.

WonderKey students are provided with a snack including 2 components daily; one in the morning and the other, during the 'After-Care Program'.

Children should bring a filled water bottle to school each day clearly marked with his/her name.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Please be sure to **label** all articles of clothing that are brought into school. Labeling first and last names on clothing is important. The few minutes required to do this will save many minutes for everyone if articles are misplaced.

Extra Clothing/Smock for Arts and Crafts

Each child must have an extra set of clothing (shirt, pants, underwear and socks) here at school 'just in case'. Please send these items in a shoe size box suitable for storage, marked with your child(ren)'s name. An old, oversized shirt or smock will also be needed for painting and other messy activities. Developmentally appropriate activities for young children can be messy, so please keep this in mind as you dress your child(ren) for the school day.

Bicycle Helmets, Outdoor Clothing and Boots

Please send you child(ren) to school with a well-fitting bicycle helmet for use while riding bikes at school. Additionally, for outdoor play, closed sneakers are the optimal form of footwear for safe playground fun. **Sandals and other open/loosely fitting shoes are not safe on the playground.** Children go outside on a daily basis, as weather permits. The proper attire (winter/spring jacket, boots, hats, mittens, etc.) is essential. **Mittens are preferred to gloves as they are much easier for children to put on.** It is also important for your child(ren) to be able to put on and take off his/her outdoor clothing and boots.

LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

A very important component of early learning is the environment; children learn so much from the world around them. Diversity in the classroom environment helps all children to become culturally aware. This awareness helps children to better understand and get along with others. Our classroom displays, literature, toys, etc. reflect the many cultures represented in our classrooms. We encourage families to share with us aspects of their cultures.

While it is important for English language learners to learn English, it is also important for them to continue to know their native languages. With this in mind, we ask families whose home language is not English, to share with their child's teacher(s) ways that she can incorporate their language into the school day. Pictures and nonverbal communication strategies may be used to support understanding when a child does not understand English.

**It is our policy to celebrate the differences among us,
while learning about all that we have in common.**

COMMUNICATION

Working together with families is an important role of educators. At **The WonderKey School** we value the relationships that we have with our families. Communication between home and school is welcomed and encouraged.

Getting To Know You Meeting

Among the various forms we ask you to complete as your child(ren) enter(s) the WonderKey Program is a **Confidential Questionnaire**. In addition to the information that you provide about your child, we offer a **"Getting to Know You Meeting"**. Please let us know if you would like to schedule an in-person or telephone meeting with your child's classroom teacher.

Student Screening

As we partner with you in your child's early education, we ask that each family complete a questionnaire known as **"The Ages and Stages Questionnaire"**(ASQ). This very important tool is used to ensure that each WonderKey student's development is proceeding appropriately during the formative years. The "ASQ" is the early childhood screening tool recommended by the **Pennsylvania Keystone Stars** continuous quality improvement program.

Ongoing Communication

All families will be given a code for entry into the **ClassDojo app**. Using this app, WonderKey staff post wonderful photos of classroom activities and useful parent messages.

Newsletters

The Keynote, a school newsletter, is published monthly and sent to your family electronically. Please make sure we have your current e-mail address.

Student Assessment

During October, February and May, an assessment of your child's progress at school will be conducted. Student assessments are based on teacher observations and include documentation of your child's work. **Parent-Teacher Conferences** are scheduled in October and May, while the February assessments are sent home for your review. All child assessments require a parent signature. Should a concern arise at any time, please contact your child's teacher or the School Director.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

If you wish, cupcakes or other treats may be sent to school on this special day. Please keep in mind our "**peanut aware**" policy when sending in treats. A book may be donated to the school's library in honor of your child's special day. Book suggestions are available through your child's teacher.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

Family members are invited to WonderKey for various Special Events. We also welcome family members to share a special skill or to join us Mystery Readers.

PARENT EDUCATION

From time to time we come across articles and/or learn about online sessions that may be of interest to families with young children. We are happy to share these resources with WonderKey Families.

HEALTH INFORMATION

Health Assessment

School must receive your child(ren)'s 'Child Health Report' form prior to attendance at school. The form provided is state mandated; no substitutions can be accepted.

Medications

Medication may be dispensed to your child(ren) during the school day. Upon dropping off a medication a parent or guardian must complete a **Medication Administration Packet**. This packet will provide WonderKey staff with the information necessary to administer medication to your child safely. All prescription drugs must be sent in pharmacy packaging that contains the child's name, dosage, frequency of dosage and doctor's name. Over the counter medications must be sent in the original container from the pharmaceutical company.

**Please be certain to hand-deliver medication to the WonderKey Staff.
DO NOT LEAVE MEDICATION IN YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOLBAG, LUNCHBOX OR
IN ANY PLACE WITHIN A CHILD'S REACH.**

For children who need ongoing medication, have allergies or any other special medical needs, families must complete a 'Care Plan'. This documentation will enable WonderKey to provide the best care in your absence.

Food, Drug, Insect or Other Allergies

School requires documentation of food, drug or other allergies (bee stings) which may affect your child(ren). Our school environment is peanut aware. WonderKey Staff are aware of children's food allergies and insure that affected children do not ingest known allergens. WonderKey staff are trained in the use of Epi-Pens in the event that a child is prescribed such medication.

Toilet Training

Please let your child's teacher know as your child enters the toilet training process. Teachers in our 2 and 3 year old classrooms are happy to help your child attain this very important life skill. Let us know how we can be consistent with your approach.

Hand Washing

In an effort to reduce the spread of germs, hand washing is a very important part of our school day. Before and after various activities children must wash their hands at school. Simple songs are sung during hand washing to insure that hands are thoroughly washed.

First Aid/CPR

All WonderKey Staff are required to be certified in Pediatric First Aid and CPR; certifications must be kept current.

ILLNESS

A child with a cough, runny nose, fever, "not feeling well" or flu-like symptoms **MUST** be kept home as a precaution. Be sure your child has fully recovered from an illness before returning to school. Please refer to the our the **Health Information Guide** below. In the event of a contagious disease, a doctor's note is required for re-admittance. If a child has a fever over 100 degrees, or is simply not feeling well at school, his/her parents will be notified to have child picked up from school immediately. The child may return after being fever-free without medication for 24 hours and all symptoms of illness are resolved.

Disease	Symptoms	Exclusion from School
Chicken Pox	Rash (successive crops of red dots that turn into fluid-filled blisters and then dry to form scabs,) fever.	Not less than 6 days after appearance of eruption.
Mumps	Fever, nausea, pain, and swelling of jaws.	Nine days
Measles	Starts like a cold with fever, watery eyes and nose, sneezing and slight cough.	From onset of symptoms until 7 days days after all symptoms and abnormal secretions of the mucous membranes have ceased.
Scarlet Fever and Strep Infections	Fever, vomiting, sore throat, rash (pinpoint dots) on upper part of neck and chest, strawberry tongue.	24 hours after treatment has been received.
Pinkeye	Redness of the eye with itching and burning lids and discharge.	24 hours after treatment has been received.
Impetigo	Skin imperfection; rash with puss filled pimples.	Excluded from school until doctor gives written release.
Pinworm	Itching of anus	24 hours after treatment has been received.
Head Lice and Nits	Itching at the nape of neck and around ears	Once treated, the child may return to school.
Covid-19	Fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea.	5 consecutive days beginning with symptom onset or diagnosis followed by wearing a face mask for 5 days.

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES (D.H.S.) FORMS

In compliance with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, D.H.S. forms must be kept on file at The WonderKey School for each child. We appreciate your cooperation with returning these forms promptly. **All applicable and highlighted lines must be filled out completely.** Forms must be turned in prior to your child's start of school. Please be sure to notify us of any changes of address, phone number or email that may occur during the school year.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT PRACTICES

The WonderKey School has had a long-standing commitment to positive behavior supports and practices. Research indicates that family involvement in their child(ren)'s education impacts lifelong health, as well as developmental and academic outcomes.

The WonderKey School's behavioral support policies include:

1. Staff implementation of positive, consistent behavior strategies.
2. Cooperation between WonderKey parents and WonderKey staff to prevent or resolve behavioral issues.
3. Ensure that all families and program staff are aware of available community resources that provide support when deemed necessary.

SUPPORT SERVICES

In any group of children there is a diverse set of educational needs. It is important to **The WonderKey School** staff to gather information regarding the best way to educate each child. Individualized Education Programs (IEP) and Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP), created by service providers working with children with special needs, include this very helpful information. If your child has an IEP or IFSP, a team meeting to discuss his/her goals and learning plan will be scheduled. **Please see our School Director to arrange this meeting.** This meeting will allow our staff to work with support staff toward intended goals in a consistent manner. Please provide **The WonderKey School** with a copy of your child's learning plan. Having a copy will help us to help your child attain any educational goals therein.

We understand that the information found on an IEP/IFSP is protected by privacy laws, including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Release of information may also be required to speak to members of a child's treatment team.

INCLUSION

As we work in the best interests of all our students, families and staff, we want to work together with WonderKey families. Under some circumstances, WonderKey staff may find it necessary to engage with families/caregivers and request assistance from community resources. Depending on the nature of a child's challenges, the WonderKey School staff will help the family to secure appropriate support services. The WonderKey School is an inclusive program. It is our policy, in the best interest of all, for our population to be diverse in terms of ability, race, ethnicity, religion, gender and sexual orientation.

It is never our desire to exclude, suspend or expel a child from The WonderKey School Program. To that end, we look forward to partnering with all WonderKey families in an effort to assure an optimal learning environment for all our children.

REFERRALS

It is the responsibility of WonderKey Staff members to act in the best interest of every child. When a program staff member feels that a child may be in need of outside services, that staff member will communicate the need, in confidence, to the School Director. The staff member and School Director will confer on the subject. If the need for professional evaluation is agreed upon, a meeting with the child's family will be scheduled. At that meeting, parents will be provided with contact information for appropriate resources.

The decision to make such referrals is not taken lightly. When a referral is made, it is our expectation that families follow through in the best interest of their child.

MANDATED REPORTERS

In Pennsylvania, anyone who, as a part of their job, has contact with children is mandated to report suspected child abuse and neglect.

TRANSITIONING FROM THE WONDERKEY PROGRAM

In most instances, our 'Pre-Kindergarten 4' children transition to a Kindergarten program for the following academic year. A variety of classroom activities are planned in an effort to make this transition a smooth one. 'Pre-Kindergarten 4' families may look to Kindergarten Here I Come, an on-line publication that answers questions and offers activity suggestions for families whose child is getting ready to attend Kindergarten. WonderKey also provides families with important information about Kindergarten meeting and registration dates.

Upon written request **The WonderKey School** is happy to provide families of children transitioning out of the program a copy of their child's school records.

SCHOOL CLOSING/DELAYED OPENING

Parent Notification

In the event of a change of school operating hours, you will be notified through the **ClassDOJO** app. If you choose to keep your child(ren) home on a delayed opening, it is not necessary to call the school to report his/her absence.

Snow Make-Up Days

The School Calendar contains built-in snow days. If you have any questions, please call the office (610) 279-8711.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In an effort to assure you of our concern for the safety and welfare of children attending **The WonderKey School**, our **Crisis Response Plan** provides for responses to all types of emergencies. Depending on the circumstance of the emergency, we will use one of the following protective actions:

Immediate Evacuation- Students are evacuated to a safe area on the grounds of the facility in the event of a fire or other emergency.

In-Place Sheltering- Sudden occurrences, weather or hazardous materials related, may dictate that taking cover inside the building is the best immediate response.

Evacuation- Total evacuation of the facility may become necessary if there is a danger in the area. In this case, children will be taken to the relocation facility:

Stony Creek Elementary School
1721 Yost Road
Blue Bell, PA 19422

Modified Operation- May include cancellation/postponement or rescheduling of normal activities.

- These actions are normally taken in case of a winter storm or building problem that make it unsafe for students (such as utility disruptions), but may be necessary in a variety of situations.
- Please listen to television channels 6 ABC, 10 NBC or FOX 29 for announcements relating to any of the emergency actions listed above.
- Depending upon the circumstances we may contact WonderKey families by telephone.
- We ask that you not call during the emergency. This will keep the main telephone line free to make emergency calls and relay information. We will call you to let you know that we have taken one of these protective actions. We will also call you when we have resolved the situation and it is safe for you to pick up your child.

We specifically urge you NOT to attempt to make different arrangements during an emergency. This will only create additional confusion and divert staff from their assigned emergency duties. In order to assure the safety of your children and our staff, we ask your understanding and cooperation. Should you have additional questions regarding our emergency operating procedures please contact us.

**A copy of the Crisis Response Plan is available
for your review in our school office.**

